UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Thursday, January 15, 2026

Why folks are nervous - Part 2

As blog readers will know, there is nervousness on campus about a move by Murphy Hall to consolidate the various computer systems at UCLA into a single "One IT" system. The Senate has passed a resolution about this matter.

Apart from concerns about individual privacy, etc., there is the record of failures to seamlessly install new computer systems. Blog readers will know about the Regents ongoing lawsuit against contractors involved in a system that was supposed to handle pension payments.

The Chronicle of Higher Education recently had a piece about why universities push for centralized, unified computer systems:

Colleges now exist in a world where one human slip-up or system vulnerability can lead to a disastrous data breach that impacts thousands of people's personal data. In the past two months, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University, and Princeton University have fallen victim to hacks. Earlier in 2025, so did Columbia University, Dartmouth College, and New York University. Those recent headlines have made higher ed's cybersecurity infrastructure seem particularly inadequate... The reality, tech experts say, is that colleges are constantly being bombarded with cyberattacks. Powered by artificial intelligence, these strikes have become more sophisticated. And there's only so much that campus IT departments can do...

A fundamental problem for higher ed is that the best IT strategies involve pushing for more centralized control of technology use, which often doesn't go over well on a college campus. Especially at large private institutions, different schools or departments, such as the business school and the medical school, are more likely to have their own IT teams, said [Anita] Nikolich, [director of research and technology innovation at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign] who used to be executive director of IT infrastructure at the University of Chicago. "When you have so many independent IT departments … that itself is a huge risk factor," she said.

Universities typically resist centralization, Nikolich said, in the name of academic freedom. "It's a mentality of, if I become centralized and shared, my faculty are not going to be allowed to do what they need to do for their research," she said...

Full story at https://www.chronicle.com/article/why-cyberattacks-in-higher-ed-keep-proliferating.

What yours truly gathers from the above is that when university computer folks get together in whatever forums they do, central control is now a thing.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: Columbia, Dartmouth, email fraud, Harvard, NYU, Princeton U, U of Illinois, U of Pennsylvania, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 223

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Fight for the Future of Higher Education: Academic Freedom from the Classroom to the Clinic
- Our Concerns Over Revisions to APMs 15 and 16
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- Letter from AAUP to UC Objecting to Trellix
- Judge rules Trump demands of UCLA must be made public

Remaking the University

- Minneapolis Lessons for Higher Education - 1/31/2026
- Achieving Our University - 1/20/2026
- Liner Note 46. On Direct Faculty Control of Universities - 1/17/2026

Higher Ed. News & Commentary

- Chronicle of Higher Education
- Inside Higher Education
- Remaking the University
- Changing Universities
- California Professor

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Other Faculty Organizations

- American Association of University Professors
- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

Topics

From Bloomberg Law: *The Texas Supreme Court has ended the state's reliance on the American Bar Association to accredit its law schools, finalizing a rule that places the state high court in charge of that certification. The court issued preliminary approval of the rule in September but continued to solicit public comments on its move through the fall. The US Federal Trade Commission weighed in with support of the change in December, calling the ABA a monopoly.*

In the Jan. 6 order, the Texas Supreme Court noted that it intends to ensure that law degrees from schools in Texas are portable to other states, and vice-versa. It also doesn't plan to impose any additional burdens on law school accreditation, it said.

...The ABA's diversity requirements for law schools have made it a target of the Trump administration, which in February threatened to pull its accrediting power nationwide unless it ends the policies. The ABA said it would temporarily suspend enforcement of its diversity and inclusion mandate.

Full story at https://news.bloomberglaw.com/litigation/texas-supreme-court-takes-over-law-school-accreditation-from-aba.

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From the NY Times: *Martin Peterson, a philosophy professor at Texas A&M University, was thunderstruck when he was told on Tuesday that he needed to excise some teachings of Plato from his syllabus. It was one way, his department head wrote in an email, that Dr. Peterson's philosophy class could comply with new policies limiting discussion of race and gender. Days before the start of the spring semester, one of the nation's largest public universities is racing to interpret and enforce the A&M system's rules. Some professors are reconsidering syllabuses at the direction of administrators, or are unsure whether they will be able to lead certain classes. Course sections are being canceled or potentially reclassified, threatening students' schedules.*

...Dr. Peterson's original syllabus called for modules focused on debates around abortion, capital punishment, economic justice, and race and gender ideology, among other topics. When Dr. Peterson, who has been at Texas A&M since 2014, submitted his syllabus for review last month, he told his department head that his "course does not 'advocate' any ideology." Instead, he wrote in an email he shared with The New York Times, "I teach students how to structure and evaluate arguments commonly raised in discussions of contemporary moral issues."

...Dr. Peterson got a response from Kristi Sweet, the philosophy program's head. University officials had discussed his syllabus, she wrote, and the new A&M policies. Dr. Sweet gave the professor two choices. Either Dr. Peterson could "mitigate" his course's "content to remove the modules on race ideology and gender ideology, and the Plato readings that may include these," Dr. Sweet wrote, or Dr. Peterson could be reassigned to an ethics and engineering course.

...According to the syllabus, Dr. Peterson's planned Plato readings included passages about Diotima's Ladder of Love and Aristophanes' myth involving split humans... The university asserted that Dr. Peterson added the contested coursework after the regents acted last year, but the professor insisted that he wasn't "trying deliberately to be provocative" when he included the Plato texts...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/07/us/tamu-plato-race-gender.html.

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Is small beautiful in the current higher ed climate?

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Former UCLA Law Dean Named Head of Columbia

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 110

From the Harvard Crimson: *Ranya Brooks will serve as the inaugural director of the Harvard Kennedy School's Office of Belonging, Community, and Connection, Dean Jeremy M. Weinstein announced Friday afternoon in an email to students, faculty, and staff. Brooks, who most recently served as director of workforce engagement for Harvard University Campus Services, will begin her new role on Jan. 26. The appointment follows a six-month search launched after the departure of Robbin Chapman, who previously led the school's diversity office. Chapman left during the broader rebranding of the Kennedy School's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts into what is now the OBCC...*

The shift came amid political pressure from the Trump administration, which has argued that programs focused on DEI are illegal or unconstitutional...

Full story at https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2026/1/12/brooks-named-hks-obcc-director/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, Harvard, politics

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

New Anderson Dean

From a UCLA notice:

Dear Colleagues:

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Gareth James as the next dean of the UCLA Anderson School of Management, effective July 1, 2026.

James currently serves as the John H. Harland Dean of Emory University's Goizueta Business School. During his first three years at Goizueta, the school has flourished, launching three successful new degree programs, establishing two new centers, creating three new endowed faculty chairs, recruiting 22 new full-time faculty — representing almost a quarter of current business faculty — and experiencing a 35 percent increase in student enrollment. Thanks in part to students' successful career outcomes, Goizueta has seen its full-time MBA ranking by U.S. News & World Report rise from #26 in 2022 to an all-time high of #17; its Poets & Quants BBA ranking is also at a school high of #8. Prior to joining Emory in 2022, he was a member of the data sciences and operations faculty at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business (1998–2022), where he held the E. Morgan Stanley Chair in Business Administration and served in senior administrative roles, including deputy dean (2020–22), interim dean (2019–20) and vice dean for faculty and academic affairs (2013–17). He is widely respected for his visionary leadership, data-informed decision making, strategy, powerful optimism, and commitment to the future of business education and its critical role in preparing the thinkers and innovators of tomorrow.

A statistician by training, James is a noted scholar and researcher whose work has been cited more than 40,000 times. His extensive published works include numerous articles, conference

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Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 110
New Anderson Dean
No Retroactive Pension Payments for Delayed Filings

proceedings, and book chapters focused on statistical and machine learning methodologies and he is co-author of the widely cited textbook, An Introduction to Statistical Learning. He has led multiple National Science Foundation research grants and has served as an associate editor for five top research journals. The recipient of two Dean's Awards for Research Excellence from the USC Marshall School of Business, he is an elected fellow of both the American Statistical Association and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics.

His many accolades also include honors for his superb teaching and mentoring. James is a recipient of the Evan C. Thompson Faculty Teaching and Learning Innovation Award and three-time winner of the Marshall School's Golden Apple Award for best instructor in the full-time MBA program. He has also been awarded Marshall's and USC's highest honors for mentoring junior colleagues and graduate students, including the Dean's Award for Ph.D. Advising, the USC Mellon Faculty Mentoring Faculty Award, the Evan C. Thompson Mentoring and Leadership Award and the USC Provost's Mentoring Award. He received his Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Commerce degrees from the University of Auckland and his Ph.D. from Stanford University.

I want to thank the search/advisory committee members for assembling an outstanding pool of candidates for this position and for their roles in recruiting Dean James:

- Michael Waterstone (chair) – dean of the UCLA School of Law
- Heather M. Caruso – associate dean for inclusive excellence; faculty co-director, Inclusive Ethics Initiative; adjunct associate professor of management & organizations and behavioral decision making
- Charles Corbett – professor of operations management and sustainability; IBM Chair in Management
- Henry Friedman – faculty vice chair of curriculum and teaching; professor of accounting
- Jana Gallus – associate professor of strategy and behavioral decision making
- Cassie Mogilner Holmes – professor of marketing and behavioral decision making; Bud Knapp Marketing Professor
- Francis Longstaff – distinguished professor of finance, Allstate Chair in Insurance and Finance
- Kathleen McGarry – professor and chair of the Department of Economics
- Miguel Unzueta – professor and area chair, management and organizations
- Nico Voigtländer – professor and area chair, global economics and management

Steve Yu – chief operating and financial officer, UCLA South Bay; interim chief administrative officer, UCLA Chancellor's Organization; president, UCLA Anderson Alumni Network Board of Directors

I also wish to recognize and express my sincere gratitude to Margaret Shih for her dedicated service as interim dean since July 2025, and as faculty chair during the years prior.

Dean James' distinguished academic and administrative leadership, coupled with his Los Angeles roots, position him well to lead the UCLA Anderson School of Management at this pivotal moment. Chancellor Frenk and I are confident that the school will continue to fulfill its vital role on campus and will reach new heights under Gareth's capable leadership. Please join us in congratulating him and warmly welcoming him to UCLA.

Sincerely,

Darnell Hunt, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Posted by California Policy Issues at 7:08 AM No comments:

Labels: UCLA

No Retroactive Pension Payments for Delayed Filings

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The Regents have won a court case (and won again on appeal of that case) in which two individuals eligible for a UC pension, but separated from UC, delayed applying after reaching age 60. When they finally did apply, they discovered that the UC pension plan takes the position that there is no retroactivity. You simply lose potential monthly benefits until you apply.

The court decision in favor of the Regents indicated that the Plan has no obligation to make retroactive payments in such cases. In one case, the individual received a letter indicating that after age 60, there was no obvious benefit in not applying. Apparently, it did not explicitly state that therefore the individual should apply to avoid forfeiting benefits. In the other case, it isn't clear that a letter was received. But either way, the court decision says there is no obligation of the plan to provide retroactive payments.

The details can be found at https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/crt-app-fir-dis-cal-div-fou/117878698.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: pension, pensions, UC Regents, uc retirement

Straws in the Wind - Part 222

From the NY Times: *A tenured professor who was briefly fired by Austin Peay State University in Tennessee in September for what the school's president said was an insensitive social media post about the killing of Charlie Kirk will get a $500,000 settlement and his job back. The abrupt firing, which the university acknowledged soon afterward had violated the professor's due-process rights, was made after the professor's post drew a backlash from conservatives, including Senator Marsha Blackburn, Republican of Tennessee. The institution, which is a public school based in Clarksville, Tenn., about 45 miles northwest of Nashville, backtracked less than two weeks later, placing the professor on a paid suspension for the rest of the fall semester while it pursued his termination.*

The professor, Darren Michael, 56, who teaches acting and directing, was reinstated on Dec. 30 as part of the settlement with the university, which ended a more than three-month dispute over his employment... Weighing in on Mr. Kirk's assassination in a Facebook post on Sept. 12, Professor Michael shared a Newsweek article from 2023 that included a quote from Mr. Kirk about the importance of upholding the right to bear arms. The article was published about a week after a mass shooting at the Covenant School in Nashville left six people dead, including three children. The headline read: "Charlie Kirk Says Gun Deaths 'Unfortunately' Worth It to Keep 2nd Amendment." ...

Full story at: https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/07/us/austin-peay-professor-charlie-kirk-settlement-reinstated.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: academic freedom, Austin Peay State U, politics

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Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 7 (earlier than we knew)

From the LA Times: *New documents filed Friday in the Rose Bowl's breach-of-contract case against UCLA that also accuses Kroenke Sports and Entertainment of meddling on behalf of SoFi Stadium revealed communication between UCLA and a top Kroenke executive* ***dating to August 2024****. An email sent that month from UCLA chief financial officer Stephen Agostini's assistant to executives from Kroenke Sports and Entertainment and SoFi Stadium sought coordination of a Zoom meeting between the parties in September 2024 under the subject heading "UCLA Football Discussion." The importance level was listed as "high."*

A list of proposed meeting attendees included Agostini; UCLA athletic director Martin Jarmond; UCLA athletics chief financial officer Chris Iacoi; Kroenke Sports and Rams president Kevin Demoff; SoFi Stadium executives Greg Kish and Mike Forrester; and Mitchell Ziets, chief executive officer of Tipping Point Sports, a boutique sports advisory firm based in New Jersey...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/sports/ucla/story/2026-01-10/emails-reveal-that-ucla-sofi-stadium-talks-date-back-to-2024.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: athletics, UCLA

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